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ABSTRACT

The Faculty Excellence Committee, a special task force created by the Faculty Senate of the City University of New York, was requested to study all aspects of the problems concerning recruitment, appointment, promotion, and tenure at the University. This report discusses: (1) the problems of recruiting and appointing highly qualified faculty because of the University's budgetary policies and practices, and the difficulties encountered by having to recruit an unusually large number of faculty members in the lower ranks because of increased enrollments; (2) the necessity to promote only those faculty members of proven merit and with superior academic performance, rather than wholesale promotions; and (3) the importance of tenure to faculty and institution alike, and the need to judge tenure candidates on the basis of objective standards of academic excellence and merit. Nine recommendations are offered which the Senate believes will strengthen the present procedures regarding recruitment and appointment, promotion, and tenure. (AF)

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City University of New York

STATEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE
REGARDING
FACULTY EXCELLENCE

Unanimously Approved by the Senate on November 11, 1970

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INTRODUCTION:

One of the primary and most important responsibilities of the faculty[1] of any college or university concerns the recruiting, appointing, promoting, and tenuring of members of the faculty. The implications for both the faculty and the institution in this matter are considerable, and the greatest care and commitment to standards of excellence should be observed in the exercise of this responsibility. The faculty's special concern and their expertise and competence in this area cannot be disputed and, therefore, their judgment and authority in these matters must be preeminent.

However, to insure that appointment, promotion, and tenure procedures function properly, it is appropriate that they should be periodically reviewed and evaluated for effectiveness. Such review and evaluation should be initiated and conducted by the faculties and not left to the determination of the Administration, the Board of Higher Education or some other body outside the University.

Accordingly, the Senate, on February 17, 1970, acted to empower its Executive Committee to establish a special task force for the purpose of "studying all aspects of the problems concerning recruitment, appointment, promotion, and tenure in the City University." This task force, known as the Faculty Excellence Committee, reported to the Senate in October of this year.

The statement of the University Faculty Senate that follows[2] is based on consideration of the report of the Faculty Excellence Committee, as well as on current procedures within the City University, the collectively negotiated contracts, and the policy guidelines of the AAUP where relevant.

RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT:

Recruitment and appointment, promotion, and tenure are conceptually distinct and should be also in practice. The procedures and criteria for each should be sharply

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1. In the context of this document, the term faculty includes teaching, research, library, and counseling personnel.

2. N.B.: The statements and recommendations contained in this document are based on the assumption that the present system of elected department chairmen will be maintained, and are contingent thereon.

defined and should reflect objective standards of quality and academic excellence.

Ideally, the best qualified persons should be sought out and recruited for appointment regardless of geographic location, and of them, the best available ones ought to be appointed. Recruitment should be aggressive and demanding, rather than passive. Recruitment and appointment lay the base for the future tenured faculty and it is essential that the task be carried out deliberately and that the broadest possible spectrum of candidates be considered.

Although the faculty is responsible for recruitment and appointment, it is clear that they do not possess the means to correct deficiencies in this area solely through their own best efforts.

At the City University two conditions in particular exist which tend powerfully to defeat even the most conscientious efforts to develop a sound departmental recruitment and appointments policy.

First, and most importantly, are the budgetary practices to which the City University is subject. During the late fall, winter, and early spring when the competitive activities concerning recruitment and appointment are at their height, the authorities charged with recruiting and appointing new personnel are still ignorant of the amount of money or number of lines that will be available to them. By the time they do have the necessary information which will permit them to make firm commitments, the best candidates have often been lost to other institutions and the University is reduced to "scraping the bottom of the barrel." As Robert C. Weaver in his letter of resignation as president of Baruch College put it according to the New York Times of June 23, 1970:

> Particularly frustrating, he said, were budgetary procedures that only let him know his next year's budget months after much of the work, such as faculty recruiting, should have been done.
>
> "Established colleges are inconvenienced by this," his letter said, "but ones with a major new academic curriculum are greatly stymied in threir recruitment and educational planning."

If the colleges and the faculties are not to be permanently handicapped in this regard, it is essential that the City, the University Administration, and the Board

of Higher Education move quickly to correct deficiencies in the present budget procedures.

Secondly, the University must at times appoint an unusually large number of faculty members in the lower ranks, and the chairmen and P & B Committees charged with scrutinizing qualified and available persons and recommending their appointment are now vastly overburdened. Increased enrollments in the University have accentuated this problem and will likely continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

One other condition, which bears directly upon the ability of the University to recruit the most talented and able people, concerns the adequacy of facilities for the faculty. Present salary schedules in effect at the City University are not sufficient in themselves to attract consistently well-qualified personnel. A great deal needs to be done to improve research opportunities, libraries, office space, secretarial and other adjunct services, and optimal class size. This need is felt particularly at the community colleges and some of the newer senior colleges.

A partial and immediate remedy to this situation could be accomplished through increased opportunities for an exchange of faculty among the various colleges and units of the University. Faculty members in the sciences, for example, who require extensive laboratory equipment for research and whose colleges do not presently possess such facilities, might be given an opportunity to spend part of their time at another unit where the necessary equipment is available. Exchanges of this nature would benefit not only the individual faculty members involved, but students as well, who would have the opportunity to study under and come in contact with faculty members possessing special expertise in areas and disciplines not readily available to the student at his own college. In cases of exchange involving faculty members with national or international reputations in their fields, the benefit to the students is clear.

Definite plans for improving faculty facilities and opportunities for exchange should be developed and implemented at the earliest possible date.

PROMOTION:

It is in the best interests of the faculty, the department, and the college that

rigorous standards be met for promotion. Clearly, the professional interests and integrity of the faculty demand that only qualified individuals be promoted. Similarly, the department itself depends for its effectiveness and prestige upon a policy of promotion through merit and superior academic performance. Not only do wholesale promotions undertaken with minimum scrutiny and regard for standards severely diminish the quality of a department, but they also handicap the department in recruiting new and able faculty members. A weak department might be perpetuated by the natural competitive desire of its members to keep new appointments and promotions comfortable to themselves.

TENURE:

While recruitment, appointment, and promotion are important to the quality of a college or university and its faculty, it is by its tenure appointments that the academic excellence of an institution is determined.

As a safeguard of academic freedom, tenure is indispensable, for it permits the faculty member to express his views and to carry on research without regard to economic penalties that might be imposed by the institution or under pressure from the public.

Like promotion, however, tenure must not be viewed as a right to be automatically granted to all who are appointed to the faculty. Only after the most thorough and exhaustive procedures of evaluation and review have been undertaken should tenure be conferred. Tenure is nothing less than a lifetime promise of employment, and as such, should not be entered into lightly by any institution.

However, tenure is not an entirely one-sided relationship benefiting only the faculty member to whom it is granted. The granting institution benefits as well through its ability to keep the best and most talented members of the faculty by offering financial security. If, however, tenure is granted to individuals who are less than well qualified, the institution will be likely to experience an exodus of its best faculty who will not wish to remain at a college or university where mediocrity is rewarded and standards are declining.

It is essential that in seeking to maintain a flexible policy with regard to

tenure a department not establish fixed quotas or percentages for ranks or numbers of tenured faculty. All members of a department, and tenure candidates in particular, must be considered on the basis of objective standards of academic excellence and merit.

At the present time, procedures for promotion and tenure within the City University involve review at the departmental, divisional, or college level by elected faculty committees which report through the appropriate deans to the president who, in turn, recommends to the Board of Higher Education.

For as long as anyone can recall, the Board of Higher Education has never disapproved a presidential tenure recommendation, and this is as it should be, since the proper function of the Board is the setting of policy guidelines and the monitoring of compliance with Board regulations. Similarly, many presidents have either rarely disapproved a tenure recommendation or have consistently substituted their judgment for that of the faculty in making tenure recommendations, even though the Bylaws of the University mandate that he "shall consult with the appropriate departmental and faculty committees...on appointments, reappointments and promotions; (and) present to the Board his recommendations thereon...." The power to "recommend" grants the president the right to approve or disapprove a tenure recommendation only after review and consultation with the faculty.

The elected Personnel and Budget Committee system is an important element of faculty self-government with numerous procedural safeguards designed to insure a high degree of fairness and impartial decision making. Nevertheless, it can happen that a large committee, such as the college-wide P & B Committee, in search of consensus may be led to compromise, resulting in a relaxation of strict adherence to standards of excellence.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

With the foregoing observations clearly in mind, the Senate offers the following recommendations, which, we believe, will strengthen the present procedures regarding recruitment and appointment, promotion, and tenure without sacrificing the rights of

the faculty to govern themselves in these important matters.

I. Budget procedures within the University must be revised and improved so that departments have clear information during the active recruiting season (before the end of September) regarding the financial resources and numbers of lines that will be available to them. So long as departments remain unable to make firm commitments no earlier than the late spring, the University will forfeit opportunities to recruit many of the most highly qualified individuals. The long-range effects of the present budgetary procedures can have only a negative impact upon standards at the City University.

II. A master file of persons available for academic positions should be established as an aid and adjunct to present recruitment procedures. Recruitment of new members of the faculty must continue to remain a departmental responsibility, and the maintenance of a master file in a central office of the University should in no way imply an erosion of the responsibility of the faculty in this area. Decisions regarding appointments would continue to be made at the local level; however, the existence of a master file would provide clear economies to both the department and the University by permitting local authorities charged with recruitment responsibilities to consider a much broader range of candidates than is now feasible and to also consider candidates in more than one unit or department of the University at a time. We reiterate, however, that recruitment must remain a local faculty responsibility and the obligation of the appropriate departmental authorities to respond to all inquiries concerning positions on the faculty is in no way reduced by the establishment of a master file. The function of a central office in this matter must be regarded as informational only, and not evaluative.

III. Each department should be encouraged to develop a long-range plan with regard to tenure policy. By having available information which clearly sets forth the consequences of tenuring members of the faculty in varying percentages, the department can be aided in setting guidelines for future tenure appointments. The criteria for

all tenure appointments, however, must remain those of academic excellence, ability, and merit without consideration to fixed quotas or percentages.

IV. At each college a faculty-elected Academic Review Committee should be established to participate in the process of reviewing all promotion and tenure recommendations with the Academic Dean or Dean of Faculty. The Academic Review Committee should be elected by, but not necessarily drawn from, the college P & B Committee. If the college P & B Committee has both elected and appointed members, then only the elected members should vote. In the event that the college P & B Committee is entirely appointive,[1] then the Academic Review Committee should be elected by the faculty at large. In any but exceptional cases, the consensus view of the Academic Review Committee should be determinative. (If the Academic Review Committee reverses a recommendation of the college P & B Committee, it should so inform the college P & B Committee.) In cases of disagreement between the dean and the other members of the Academic Review Committee, the dean would report his recommendations to both the president and the Committee. All recommendations emanating from the Academic Review Committee or the dean regarding promotion or tenure recommendations should also be reported to the college P & B Committee. Such a method for review of and reporting on promotion and tenure appointments eliminates the major weakness of the committee system, while maintaining the faculty's preeminent role in these matters.

An inseparable and indispensable corollary to the above recommendation is that the Academic Dean or Dean of Faculty be appointed by the president upon the advice and consent of the faculty or an elected representative faculty body. The importance to the faculty and the college of the position of Academic Dean or Dean of Faculty makes it imperative that candidates be acceptable not only to the president, but to the faculty as well. A search committee procedure (the committee to report its recommendations to both the president and the faculty) would serve as the most effective agency for accomplishing the desired end - with the committee free to recommend to the

1. The Senate disapproves of Bylaw exceptions permitting colleges to appoint P & B Committees. Where such exceptions are now operative, the Academic Review Committee should be elected by the faculty at large.

president and the president free to bring candidates to the attention of the committee. Good academic practice and efficient operation of the college require that the president be closely guided in important academic appointments by the faculty.

V. In cases of controversial, early, or other special tenure decisions, consultation with faculty members or other qualified persons within or outside the City University may be appropriate. Such consultation should be undertaken only by, or in agreement with, an appropriate elected faculty body - departmental, divisional, or college-wide - within the college or University.

VI. Research opportunities, libraries, office space, and secretarial assistance should be improved to fulfill the University's commitments under the collectively negotiated contracts. Class size should be modified to achieve optimal educational results. Attractive salaries alone are not sufficient inducement to draw to the City University the most highly qualified individuals for appointment to the faculty. Adequate facilities and services for the faculty benefit not only the individual faculty member, but the college as well, which can reasonably expect that the elimination of present deficiencies in these areas will lead to improved effectiveness in the discharge of the faculty's professional responsibilities to the college and the students. It is not sufficient, however, that the Administration of the University limit itself merely to statements of intention regarding improved facilities. A definite plan should be prepared outlining, with specific recommendations, how such improvement will be implemented.

VII. On June 17, 1970 the Senate, as part of its principles of university and college governance, adopted a resolution regarding student input to the deliberations of Personnel and Budget Committees. That resolution reads in part as follows:

> "...in recognition of the valuable contributions to the deliberations of P & B Committees which student evaluations of faculty can make, the colleges should be urged to establish formal means for considering the views of students in these deliberations."

Student evaluations of faculty classroom and teaching performance should be institutionalized as one among a number of factors in considering promotion and tenure. Ideally,

a standard college-wide student evaluation form should be developed on the basis of consultation between faculty and students to be completed by students in each of their classes. Such forms should be submitted to departmental P & B Committees to be used in conjunction with faculty observation reports and other data in evaluating the ability and merit of all faculty members being considered for promotion or tenure.

VIII. Encouragement should be given to the occasional exchange of faculty members among the various colleges and units of the University for the purpose of enhancing the opportunity for faculty to engage in research and teaching in their areas of specialization where facilities for such work are limited or unavailable at their own institution. Such exchanges should be arranged in consultation with the appropriate departmental body.

IX. In view of the increase in administrative responsibilities, and in order that department chairmen be free to devote themselves to their duties as the department's chief academic officer - namely, formulating and implementing departmental policies; representing their departments at college, university, and professional meetings; and attending to overall supervision of their departments and departmental activities - chairmen of large departments (those numbering twenty-five or more full-time equivalent members) should have adequate full-time administrative assistance to permit them to fulfill their obligations. A departmental assistant should be appointed with the approval of the departmental P & B Committee and should act under the direction of the chairman and serve at the pleasure of the chairman. An assistant's duties should include all those deemed appropriate by the chairman excepting those requiring professional academic judgments which can only be rendered by the chairman or another member of the department.